

Managing an Online Course: Discussion Forums

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Content Overview

1. The importance of online discussion: active learning, reflection, interaction, ownership, shared views.
2. Well structured and well-managed online discussion.
3. Starting with good critical questions and initiating critical thinking through discussion.



Content Overview

4. Types of online discourse.
5. Discussion protocols.
6. Instructor roles: design, starting, monitoring, weaving, summarizing.



Content Overview

7. Making sure that students understand the type of academic discussion.
8. Subject line.
9. Due dates.



Content Overview

10. Think about assigning student roles and responsibilities.

11. Build instructor presence.



Advice on Managing Courses

EdTech
Innovation Through Collaboration

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❖ **ENHANCE YOUR TEACHING**

- » Blackboard
 - » Before You Get Started
 - » Planning Your Course
 - » Building Your Course
 - » Managing Your Course

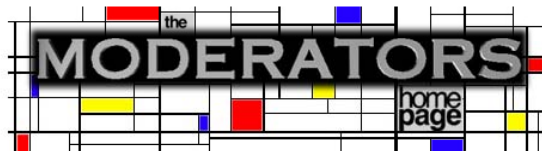
Managing Your Course

You've planned the organization of your materials, and you've built the course site. Now comes the fun part: make your site available to your audience.

Before You Go "Live"

Before you make your course available, you'll want to check it carefully. Use this Course

The Moderators Homepage



Resources for Moderators and Facilitators of Online Discussion

[mauri collins](#) and [Zane L. Berge](#)

Berge Collins Associates

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Examples of Challenges

1. Student sign up for role and drops class.
2. In discussion too much or too little.
3. Factual questions.
4. Larry McCurley story.



Advice and Guidelines

1. Design asynchronous learning protocols.
2. Be aware of different types of academic discourse and their uses.



Advice and Guidelines

3. Monitor discussion at least 2-3 times per week.
4. Be one of the first to post and post near top and end of forum so that students think you are always there.



Advice and Guidelines

5. Spur discussion with questions and controversial statements or items in the news.
6. Pull out commonalities and differences in student posts (foster summarization and also controversy).



Advice and Guidelines

7. Assign roles like devil's advocate, optimist, pessimist, summarizer, coach, questioner, etc.
8. Require reflection papers on the online discussion recapping what they have learned.



Advice and Guidelines

9. Assign discussion moderators or starters and enders for each week.
10. Do not summarize too often.
11. Let students know when they can expect you to post.



Advice and Guidelines

12. Announce when the discussion for a week is starting as well as closing.
13. Consider assigning students to blog on their readings each week before or after entering online discussion.



Advice and Guidelines

14. Praise students who consistently are posting substantive postings or making interesting and insightful comments.



Advice and Guidelines

- 15. Require a minimum of 3 sentences in one post.
- 16. Refer to each other by name in their posts so as to continue threads.
- 17. Change the subject header to be more controversial, accurate, clear, etc.



Advice and Guidelines

- 18. Keep group size higher than 5 or 6 but lower than 15, if possible.
- 19. Include some paired activities with critical friend feedback.
- 20. Include discussion prompts that foster critical thinking and not declarative responses or pithy answers.



Wishing You Best the Online Discussion Forums Ever!

For More Information, Contact:
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